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A NEW CUBAN SIDA

BY BROTHER LÉON

Sida Brittoni Fr. Léon, sp. nov.

Perennial; stems hirsute-strigose, diffusely branched at the base, prostrate, 3 to 4 dm. long, the branches ascending or prostrate; leaves oblong to elliptic or obovate, rounded at apex, serrate above the middle, 1 to 2 cm. long, 4 to 9 mm. wide, subcordate at base, long-ciliate, hirsute on both surfaces, with long scattered stellate hairs beneath; petioles 4 to 7 mm. long; stipules linear or somewhat spatulate, long-ciliate, little longer than the petioles; flowers clustered at the end of the branches; pedicels shorter than the subtending petioles; calyx 5-lobed, 5 mm. long, its lobes ovate, acute, long-ciliate, slightly longer than the tube, densely hirsute within; petals yellow, about 13 mm. long, puberulent; style-branches 5, red, slender, 4 mm. long; carpels 5, 2.7 mm. long, puberulent, sharply reticulate-wrinkled, 2-pointed at apex, 1-seeded, partially 2-valved; seed 3-angled, 2 mm. long, brown, filling the cavity.

Dry savanna, Chirigota, Pinar del Rio, *Léon & Roca 7466*.

This species was collected by the writer in company with Father Modesto Roca Masden, on August 9, 1917, in the savanna of Chirigota, near Santa Cruz de los Pinos, Pinar del Rio province.* This locality is well known to the botanists who have studied the flora of Cuba, a number of rare plants having been collected there by Charles Wright, who, for several years, had his quarters not very far away, at Retiro, at the foot of the western mountain range.

North of the road which connects Havana with Pinar del Rio, lies the higher and drier portion of the Chirigota savanna. In its gravelly soil more or less mixed with grains of limonite, is growing a palm (*Sabal* sp.) closely related to the palmetto of the southeastern States, and, among lower plants, *Sporobolus indicus* is predominant in many places. In that environment,

* The following specimens from other localities are in the herbarium of The New York Botanical Garden: pine-woods, Herradura (*Earle 748*); royal palm savanna, Herradura (*Britton, Earle & Gager 6342*); coastal plain near Coloma (*Britton & Gager 6996*). The plant is also in the herbarium of Columbia University, as found by *Charles Wright (2046)*, presumably in Pinar del Rio, and this was the collection recorded by Grisebach as *Sida ciliaris* L.—F. W. PENNELL.

the plant on which the new species is based attracted our attention by its abundant and hirsute foliage and its relatively large yellow flowers, perhaps the most showy of all Cuban *Sidas*.

The specimens collected had been at first tentatively referred to *Sida ciliaris* L., many characters being common to both species: Stems prostrate, hirsute-strigose, diffusely branching at base; leaves crenate or serrate above the middle; flowers clustered at the end of branches; long-ciliate linear or spatulate stipules. Remembering how the living plant differed in aspect from *S. ciliaris* I thought it likely to be a distinct species. In fact a more accurate observation revealed a number of distinct characters. At first sight, the mode of branching and the distribution of leaves appear very different; in *S. Brittoni* the numerous stems which branch only near the base and have their nodes approximate, are leafy and nearly simple most of their length, while in *S. ciliaris* the stems, shorter and thinner and with relatively long internodes branch repeatedly throughout and most of the leaves are crowded near the extremities of the branches and around the inflorescence.

Among other differences are the following: *S. Brittoni* has the leaves hirsute on both surfaces, the corolla yellow, the style-branches red and 4 mm. long, the top of the fruit puberulent and sharply reticulate-wrinkled; in *S. ciliaris* the leaves are glabrous on the upper surface and stellate-pubescent beneath, the smaller corolla reddish purple, the style-branches pale yellow, 2 mm. long, the top of the fruit tubercled and stellate-pubescent.

As to the habitat it appears to be also different, *Sida ciliaris* being mostly confined to the sandy or rocky limestone soil of coastal thickets and adjacent hillsides.

This species is named in honor of Dr. Nathaniel Lord Britton, who has contributed so much to the knowledge of the Cuban flora.

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